

# PUGET SOUND INITIATIVE

## Brief History of Puget Sound Conservation Efforts

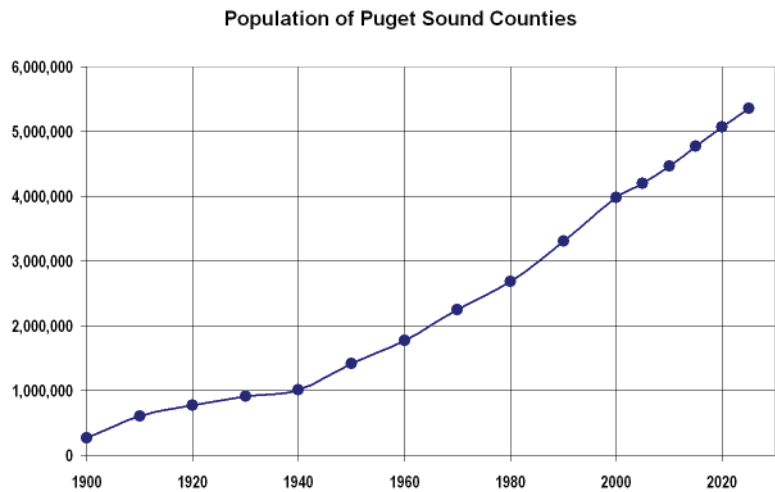
The rich and productive Puget Sound ecosystem is relatively young geologically, dating from the most recent retreat of the glaciers some 15,000 years ago. Significant changes to the ecosystem from human activities are much more recent, dating back to the 1800's when new settlers brought industrial-style development to Puget Sound. By 1853, steam sawmills were in operation in several locations.

As population in the basin increased, the stress on the ecosystem also increased. By 1900, the population of the 12 counties around Puget Sound was just over a quarter of a million. It took four decades, to 1940, to break one million. This increase continues, with a projected population of more than 5,360,000 by 2025.

The polluting of Puget Sound became a controversial issue as far back as the 1920s, when shellfish growers sought protection from the pollution from early pulp mills. But it wasn't until 1945 that a state office, the Pollution Control Commission, was

established to control pollution. State permits for wastewater discharges were not required until 1955. Pulp mills and other industrial dischargers began treating their discharges by the early 1960s. A flurry of major state and federal environmental laws were passed between 1965 and 1973 in light of growing awareness of environmental problems.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a number of newsworthy events caused broad public concern about conditions in Puget Sound, including reports of toxic contamination, closures of shellfish growing areas, sightings of dead whales and declines in some fish stocks. The resulting public outcry resulted in the initiation of the first real Puget Sound program, which continues to this day.



The following timeline lists some of the major Puget Sound health events since 1983.

DATE	Event
1983	Tacoma tideflats added to the federal Superfund site list.
1985	Formation of Puget Sound Water Quality Authority.
1985	Decision to provide secondary treatment for sewage treatment plants discharging to Puget Sound.
1987	First comprehensive Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan completed.
1988	Designation of Puget Sound as National Estuary Program.
1990	Growth Management Act approved.
1991	Adoption of sediment standards in Sound, as called for in 1987 Puget Sound Management Plan.
1991	Approval of 1991 Puget Sound Management plan as federal Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan under Clean Water Act
1991	Local governments adopt development regulations to designate and protect critical areas and to designate and conserve natural resource lands under GMA.

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1992	Environmental Cooperation Agreement signed between Washington and British Columbia
1992	Ecology releases the region's first stormwater management manual. Ecology issues baseline permit for industrial and construction site stormwater discharges.
1992	Law passed requiring formation of local shellfish protection districts when pollution closes shellfish growing areas.
1993	Burley Lagoon shellfish upgrade, first significant shellfish restoration involving non-point sources.
1995	Ecology reissues stormwater general permit for industrial activities; construction-site stormwater discharges covered under separate general permit. Ecology issues NPDES municipal phase I permits to cities of Seattle and Tacoma, King, Pierce and Snohomish counties, and WSDOT.
1995	Shoreline Management Act and GMA statutes were integrated and Best Available Science requirement added to GMA.
1995	Major updating of On-Site Sewage System rules, incorporating Puget Sound Management Plan elements.
1996	Creation of Puget Sound Action Team (from Puget Sound Water Quality Authority).
1998	Separate watershed planning systems established for water and for salmon recovery.
1998	Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative authorized by Congress.
1999	Rescue tug stationed at Neah Bay (26 responses from 1999 to summer 2005).
1999	Puget Sound Chinook Salmon listed under the Endangered Species Act.
2000	State ballast water management program created.
2000	PBT Strategy completed and delivered to Legislature.
2000	Puget Sound Management plan updated with major rewrites of Stormwater and combined sewer overflow programs.
2001	Ecology published Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington. Action Team begins active promotion of LID techniques.
2001	Formation of Shared Strategy to develop a watershed-based recovery plan for salmon.
2001	Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project launched.
2002	State creates the Ballast Water Work Group to study and recommend improvements to the state management program.
2002	Ecology reissues industrial stormwater permit and it is appealed. Action Team holds 3 regional training workshops on LID.
2003	New Shoreline Management Act guidelines adopted
2003	Marine Mammal Protection Act designation of Orca as "depleted."
2004	Invasive colonial tunicates reported in Puget Sound.
2004	Ecology issues "Beyond Waste" plan.
2004	Last Puget Sound county completed the basic GMA assignments.
2004	Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program (HCDOP) launched.
2005	Delivery of Shared Strategy's Puget Sound salmon recovery plan to NOAA.
2005	The state Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinating Committee develops and officially submits the state's Early Detection and Rapid Response Plan for responding to new invasions.
2005	Ecology issues revised industrial stormwater general permit and preliminary drafts of municipal NPDES phase I and II permits. Ecology issues draft general construction NPDES permit.
2005	HCDOP Integrated Assessment and Monitoring study launched with federal funding.
2005	Additional updating of On-Site Sewage System rules with special Puget Sound provisions.
2005	Environmental sampling indicates that PAH contamination has begun increasing while metals are decreasing.
2005	PBDEs recognized as environmental contaminant in Puget Sound.